



# NEWSLETTER

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY**



## SALUTE TO VETERANS

SDDVA staff, county veterans service officers, and leaders of the veterans service organizations are manning the Veterans Building during the South Dakota State Fair.

Susan Irons, Lincoln and Union County Veterans Service Officer, was the keynote speaker during the Veterans Day salute at the Fair today.

Representative Larry Zikmund, Senator Jim Stalzer, Terry Paulsen, and Ken

Teunissen, were presented the Chet Sorenson Veteran of the Year Award by the South Dakota Veterans Council, in recognition of their commitment and dedication to securing support for a state veterans cemetery. The South Dakota Veterans Council is made up of representatives from the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Vietnam Veterans of America.

In his "salute to veterans," Governor Dugaard commended SDDVA and their partners for their accomplishments during his terms in office and encouraged veterans to

work with these partners to secure their benefits. The Governor closed his remarks by sharing a message Senator John McCain authored before his death. "Do not despair of our present difficulties but believe always in the promise and greatness of America, because nothing is inevitable here. Americans never quit. We never surrender. We never hide from history. We make history."



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# VA EXPANDS VOC REHAB

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program (VR&E) recently began the process of reducing the average counselor-to-caseload ratio, to 1 to 125 or below, through the hiring of 172 vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRCs).

The hiring effort, which began early this summer, will help improve service to veterans with service-connected disabilities and employment barriers, as well as help provide them with expedited services to improve their ability to transition to the civilian workforce.

"The VR&E program is much more than a benefits program," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "It's a vital support network, where VA's expert counselors work closely with veterans on their personalized vocational rehabilitation goals. Congressional funding enables us to expand our team of counselors who are on the ground across the country working tirelessly for veterans, and we appreciate their support."



The VA is committed to ensuring its counselors have manageable caseloads and the resources needed to ensure veterans are receiving thorough, quality services.

Currently, 941 counselors are working across the VA's 56 regional offices, as well as in out-based and satellite locations.

Once hiring is complete for the additional 172 counselors, a total of 1,113 VRCs will be deployed in the field to serve veterans. This includes 905 VRCs at regional and out-based offices, 132 Integrated Disability Evaluation System counselors at 71 military installations and 76 Veteran Success on Campus counselors at 105 institutions of higher learning.

Since 2014, over 56,000 veterans have either completed a rehabilitation plan, are employed or have achieved a greater independence in living through VR&E assistance. The VR&E program currently has more than 123,000 participants. For more information about VR&E, visit <https://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/>.

## USS SD UPDATE

Rumors have it that the U.S.S. South Dakota has successfully completed its initial sea trial. This was the first time the Virginia Class Attack Submarine went out to sea. Another sea trial is scheduled in the near future, followed by a naval inspection, before the sub is accepted and delivered to the U.S. Navy.

They project that the U.S.S. South Dakota commissioning will take place early next year.

# VA ANNOUNCES \$200M IN FUNDING FOR HOMELESS VETERANS GRANT PROGRAMS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced it plans to provide approximately \$200 million in fiscal year 2019 funding to support more than 13,000 transitional housing beds for its Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program.

The list of community partners who will work with the VA to provide transitional housing for homeless veterans can be found on the VA's [homeless Veterans website](#).

The VA intends to award about \$2.7 million to renew 12 Special Need grants for support services for homeless veterans who have chronic mental illnesses, women veterans and veterans who must care for dependents under age 18.

"The Grant and Per Diem program gives our homeless veterans an important source of support," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "We appreciate the U.S. Congress providing this funding because every homeless veteran deserves the opportunity to move from living on the streets to a safe and supportive environment."

To receive the grants, which were published in the [federal register](#) and other public sources, each bidder submitted an application and underwent a performance review. Through this process, each applicant determined the resources it would need and the housing model for which it qualified to help veterans transition out of homelessness.

Some housing models include:

- Bridge Housing — short-term stay in transitional housing for homeless veterans with pre-identified permanent housing destinations, when that housing is not immediately available.
- Low Demand — to accommodate homeless veterans experiencing chronic homelessness, who were unsuccessful in traditional housing/residential programs.
- Hospital to Housing — addresses the housing and recuperative-care needs of homeless veterans who have been hospitalized and/or evaluated in an emergency room.
- Clinical Treatment — provides residential substance use and/or mental health treatment in conjunction with services to help homeless veterans secure permanent housing and increase income through benefits and/or employment.
- Service-intensive Transitional Housing — residential services that facilitate stabilization and transition to permanent housing.
- Transition in Place — provides support services in the veteran's living unit, phasing out over time, as the veteran adjusts to permanent housing.

Established in 1994, GPD provides needed support and services to a number of programs across the country that care for homeless veterans to help them achieve residential stability. To learn more about the VA's programs for homeless veterans, visit <http://www.benefits.va.gov/PERSONA/veteran-homeless.asp>.



# HELP SOUTH DAKOTA ADDRESS ALZHEIMER'S AND RELATED DEMENTIAS

Brad Richardson, Superintendent of the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home, serves on the South Dakota Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia Work Group (ADRD). This voluntary work group is comprised of 21 individuals determined to create a state plan on alzheimer's and related dementias to help ensure resources, policies, and personnel are in place to confront the impact of this disease on South Dakotans.

Brad is encouraging all of us to be a part of the solution and is asking that we all take time to complete their survey. Click on this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SDARD2018>



## VETERANS STAND DOWN

**Sept. 21, 2018 9:00 a.m.– 2:00 p.m. VFW**  
**3601 S. Minnesota Ave.**  
**Sioux Falls, SD**

### TRANSPORTATION AVAILABLE

Shuttle service will be every 1/2 hour starting at  
8:00 a.m. until  
1:00 p.m. from the following locations:

- Vet Center on 49<sup>th</sup> and Carnegie
- VOA Dakotas Veteran Services Center at  
14th and Cliff

On-the-spot help including brunch,  
clothing, community housing referral, medical &  
dental treatment, readjustment counseling, legal  
assistance, and much more!

For more information call:  
605-330-4552



**SEPTEMBER 1, 2018**  
**NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY**  
**300 5th ST. S., BROOKINGS, SD**

## **REGISTRATION**

**\$20 PER PERSON**  
**BEGINS AT 10AM**  
**PARADE DEPARTS AT HIGH NOON**  
**DOWN BROOKINGS MAIN AVENUE**

**\$500 BEST HAND**  
**PLUS OTHER GREAT PRIZES**

**RAIN OR SHINE**  
**ALL VEHICLES WELCOME**

**PROCEEDS**  
**BENEFIT DAV HOSPITAL**  
**TRANSPORTATION FUND**

**QUESTIONS**  
**CSM (RETIRED) ROBERT FOSTER**  
**(605) 690-1961**

**MSG ERIC KINSLOW**  
**(605) 415-1759**

**f** [facebook.com/727DAVPokerRun](https://facebook.com/727DAVPokerRun)

# **DAV/727TH CHARITY POKER RUN**

The DAV Brookings Chapter No. 22 and the 727<sup>th</sup> Transportation U.S. Army National Guard Unit will be hosting the "14<sup>th</sup> Annual DAV/727<sup>th</sup> Charity Poker Run" on Saturday, September 1st at the Brookings Armory, 300 5<sup>th</sup> Street, S., Brookings, SD. Registration starts at 10:00 a.m. with the "big run" departing with a "parade at high noon." There is a \$20 registration fee.

The event will be held rain or shine with a \$500 best hand and many super prizes. An authentic Jack Daniels Barrel used in Lynchburg, TN will also be auctioned at 5:30 p.m. All proceeds go to the DAV Hospital Transportation Network. The DAV/727<sup>th</sup> charity poker run has provided the DAV Hospital Transportation Network in FY 2017 a check for \$40,000 which brings the total to \$183,000 over 13 years.

The DAV invites all members and friends to this outstanding poker run.

If questions, please contact CSM (Retired) Robert Foster at (605) 690-1961 or MSG Erie Kinslow at (605) 415-1759. [FACEBOOK.COM/727DAVPOKERRUN](https://facebook.com/727DAVPokerrun).





# SFVAHC FLU SHOT CLINICS

**Flu season is fast approaching! Walk-in flu shot clinics currently scheduled for veterans are as follows:**

**Aberdeen CBOC**

- September 26, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
- October 23, 2018, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

**Spirit Lake CBOC**

- October 11, 2018, 12N-3:30 p.m.
- October 24, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

**Wagner Outreach Clinic**

- October 3, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
- October 24, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

**Watertown CBOC**

- October 9, 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
- October 26, 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

As soon as the flu vaccine arrives, enrolled veterans will again be able to receive flu shots during regularly scheduled appointments at the medical center and CBOCs. The annual Walgreens and VA Retail Immunization Care Coordination Program that provides no-cost flu vaccinations to veterans through 8200 Walgreens locations is now active and giving vaccinations.

## DICKERSON JOINS SDDVA TEAM



Please welcome Brett Dickerson to our SDDVA team! Brett will serve as a field service officer and will be covering the I-29 corridor that was previously covered by Mike Maske.

Brett was raised in Shenandoah, Iowa. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1985 and served six years first as a military policeman in Yuma, AZ, and then as a Marine Security Guard at various U.S. embassies and consulates in the Middle East.

After leaving the service, Brett became a police officer in Chandler, AZ. In 1995, he entered federal government service as a criminal investigator and served in this capacity with five agencies over the next 23 years. Brett retired from government service upon accepting a position with SDDVA.

Brett can be reached at 605.360.7819 or emailing him at [brett.dickerson@state.sd.us](mailto:brett.dickerson@state.sd.us).

# Free Drop-In Legal Clinic

UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTH DAKOTAState Bar of *South Dakota*

## JOIN US ON:

- **September 13, 2018** from **9am-3pm** at the **Black Hills VA Hospital** located at 500 North 5th Street, Hot Springs, SD 57747. *Shuttles will be providing transportation from the Veterans Memorial Home to the VA Hospital.*
- **September 14, 2018** from **9am-3pm** at the **Rapid City Legion Post 22** located at 818 East St. Patrick Street, Rapid City, SD 57701

**Join the South Dakota Military Legal Alliance, the Veterans Legal Education Group, and the South Dakota Low Income Taxpayer Clinic for a FREE LEGAL CLINIC. Legal professionals, along with student attorneys, will be on site to address and support the Military community with any of their legal questions and needs.**

***FREE FOR ALL SERVICE MEMBERS, THEIR FAMILIES, AND VETERANS!***

### EVENT CONTACT:

Austin Schaefer  
VLEG President  
(605) 380-0812  
[Austin.Schaefer@coyotes.usd.edu](mailto:Austin.Schaefer@coyotes.usd.edu)

### SUPPORTED BY:

South Dakota Young Lawyers Section, University of South Dakota School of Law, the South Dakota State Bar, and the VA Black Hills Veterans Justice Outreach

# SDNG UNITS RECEIVE NATIONAL AWARDS



South Dakota Air and Army National Guard units continue to earn top honors for performance excellence as they brought home six awards from the 2018 National Guard Association of the United States annual conference in New Orleans, Aug. 27.



For the fourth year in a row, the SD Air National Guard's 114th Fighter Wing of Sioux Falls was the recipient of a Distinguished Flying Unit Plaque, which recognizes the five most outstanding Air National Guard flying units in the nation. This is the eighth time the 114th has received the honor.

The 114th also received the William W. Spruance Safety Award, presented annually to the National Guard unit that makes the most significant contribution to accident prevention, and the Maj. Gen. John J. Pesch Flight Safety Award, presented annually to two flying units judged to have demonstrated the highest standards of flight safety in the Air National Guard.

SD Army National Guard units received awards in all three of the Army categories.

The 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion of Pierre received the Maj. Gen. Milton A. Reckord Trophy as the most outstanding Army National Guard battalion in the nation for achieving the highest standards in training and readiness.

The Yankton-based B Battery, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, received the General John J. Pershing Plaque for weapons marksmanship. The unit attained the highest figure of merit (highest percentage of assigned members qualified) during annual weapons qualification firing with assigned individual weapons.

The Watertown-based Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, received the Certificate of Victory for having the highest overall figure of merit in the nation.

"The state of readiness and overall quality of our units is unmatched by any other state as evidenced by the selection for these

prestigious awards," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, SDNG adjutant general. "I couldn't be more proud of the soldiers and airmen of the South Dakota National Guard!"





# UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept 1—14th Annual DAV/727th Poker Run—Brookings National Guard Armory (300 5th Street S) - 10:00 am (CT)  
 Sept 3—Labor Day (state offices closed)  
 Sept 5—Veterans Town Hall—Senior Center (1303 7th Avenue) - Aberdeen—9:00 am (CT)  
 Sept 7—Veterans Fall Benefit Fair—Moose Lodge (516 W. 15th Avenue) - Mitchell—2:00 pm—6:00 pm (CT)  
 Sept 7-9—PVA North Central Chapter Trap Shoot—Crooks Gun Club  
 Sept 10—Doug Brown Memorial Pheasant Hunt—Top Gun Hunting Ranch—Howard  
 Sept 11—Improving Veterans Care Conference—BHSU (4300 Cheyenne Boulevard) - Rapid City  
 Sept 13—Veterans Free Drop In Legal Clinic—VABHHC - Hot Springs (500 North 5th Street) 9:00 am—3:00 pm (MT)  
 Sept 14—Veterans Free Drop In Legal Clinic—Legion Post 22—Rapid City (818 E. St. Patrick) 9:00 am—3:00 pm (MT)  
 Sept 14—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—VFW Post 1273—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)  
 Sept 21—7th Annual POW/MIA Program—Sioux Falls Veterans Memorial Park (1021 W. Bailey Street) 6:30 pm (CT)  
 Sept 21—Veterans Stand Down—VFW (3601 S. Minnesota Avenue) - Sioux Falls—9:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)  
 Oct 10—SD Veterans Commission Meeting—RedRosse Grille—Pierre—8:00 am (CT)  
 Oct 12-13—DAV Fall Conference—DAV Dept. Headquarters (1519 W. 51st Street) - Sioux Falls  
 Nov 16—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Domiciliary Auditorium—Hot Springs —10:00 am (MT)



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